

the Marines the last two years I became aware that gifts for teenagers run out early. There are never enough. I knew I could come up with a plan to help. I developed a program called Toys for Teens that involves running teen gift drives in our high schools and middle schools. I presented my idea to the Marines in my area and it was enthusiastically approved. The program is well received and is being implemented all across the state giving other young people the opportunity to know joy of giving back to their community. We hope to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of donations. With this project I am proud to serve the youth of my community while also supporting my country's servicemen.

But I feel that the most important thing that I can do to show my commitment to America's future, is to tell my grandfather's story. As young people we need to make an effort to hear and pass on the stories from our country's past. Armed with the strength of the stories of our Nation's past heroes, we can truly have an inspired commitment to America's future.

IN MEMORY OF GEORGEA BLACK
McKINLEY

HON. MARION BERRY

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 23, 2004

Mr. BERRY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in memory of Georgea Black McKinley, an Arkansan whose dedication to her family, her church and her community was as strong as the constitution of her pioneering ancestors.

Mrs. McKinley could trace her family roots all the way back to the true founders of this great nation: America's first pioneers. In order to stay in touch with her historic and noble history, Mrs. McKinley was a member of the Arkansas Pioneers, United Daughters of the Confederacy and Daughters of the American Revolution.

Born in DeWitt, Arkansas, she was the daughter of the late Lester A. and Mary Black. Mrs. McKinley attended DeWitt schools, Ward Belmont School in Nashville, Tennessee and then Randolph Macon Woman's College in Lynchburg, Virginia.

Mrs. McKinley's family holds a special place in my own career, as well. It was Georgea's father, L.A., who had vision of how crucial water is to a farmer. I have no doubt Mr. Black also passed down his knowledge of irrigation strategies and water management issues to his daughter. I never met him, but the legacy of the value of water has impacted my home community forever.

Georgea McKinley was an active Methodist, but her commitments to her community did not stop at the church steps. She was a member of the Aesthetic Club, The Colonial Dames of America, Little Rock Garden Club, Junior League of Little Rock and the Edelweiss Club.

Mrs. McKinley leaves behind a large and loving family filled with children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. On behalf of the Congress, I extend sympathies to her family and the utmost respect to a woman whose love for her friends and family was unlimited and whose time was generously shared with the community. Georgea Black McKinley was a true role model, and I am honored to be able to recognize her in this Congress.

INTRODUCTION OF THE RAIL AND
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ACT

HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 23, 2004

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to be joined by my Democratic colleague from New Jersey to introduce the Rail and Public Transportation Security Act, which would force the Federal Government to finally get serious about protecting our Nation's transit and intercity rail passengers.

This bill addresses the tremendous disparity between what we spend on security for each airline passenger and what we spend for each bus and train passenger, who are no less vulnerable than those who fly. In fact, data from the National Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism shows that public transportation passengers are in far more danger worldwide than airline passengers. Since 9/11, there have been roughly 50 terrorist incidents targeting airports and airlines, resulting in about 120 deaths. In the same 3 years, there have been over 280 terrorist attacks on other transportation systems, with over 600 fatalities.

The recent attacks in Spain, and intelligence that terrorists may strike the rail and systems here in America, dictate that we now broaden our attention to also include rail and transit security. Each year, approximately 24 million intercity rail passengers ride Amtrak, and 9.6 billion people travel by transit. Every day, 32 million commuters, students, and tourists depend on our public transportation system. One of the ripple effects of 9/11 was that the aviation industry was shut down for several days. Imagine the social and economic dislocation that would occur if a major attack destroyed people's confidence in our transit system, or made it grind to a halt. The economic impact would be far greater than 9/11.

Our Nation's rail and transit systems are highly vulnerable, and require at least \$5.2 billion in capital equipment and \$800 million in annual operating expenses to adequately meet security needs, according to the American Public Transportation Association. This legislation provides that funding, and just as importantly, it allows operating expense grant money to be used for the best security device of all: more police officers.

Giving our transit agencies money for fences, cameras and explosive detection equipment is necessary, but only a half-measure unless we also give them money for the cops and security officers that make all that equipment work. This bill allows money to be used for hiring new cops and security officers, pay them overtime when necessary, deploy additional K-9 units, conduct helicopter patrols, and more. In short, it unties the hands of our transit agencies and lets them spend the money where they need it.

This legislation also provides badly needed security and safety funding for Amtrak, including \$670 million for safety upgrades to the tunnels that run underneath New York, Baltimore, and Washington, DC. These tunnels are simply not properly equipped for rescue operations or evacuation should either be necessary. An additional \$62 million for Amtrak to put towards security expenses, including the

hiring of additional police officers, is also provided.

Mr. Speaker, this bill would authorize new research and development grants to help develop new technologies for both passenger and freight rail that can help reduce the threat of terrorist attacks. And since rail security involves more than just deterring terrorist attacks, the legislation would establish new inspection procedures for rail track, and set new standards for tank cars, to make sure their hazardous cargo isn't released in the event of an accident.

I believe this bill is already long overdue. I urge my colleagues to imagine what we would have done, what action we would have taken, if the Madrid train bombings had occurred in our homeland, on our soil. What immediate investments would we have been ready to make? What urgent action would we have been willing to take?

Well, we can do it now. Let's make that investment and take those actions now. Let's take what steps we can to reduce the risk to our Nation's transit. We don't need commissions and studies after a tragedy in order to act, so let's not get mired in that now. Nearly 3 years of needs assessment and analysis have occurred, and we have the data to put a program in place. All it takes is Congress having the gumption to act before a tragedy on the rails takes place in this country.

QUESTIONING BUSH'S RECORD ON
VETERANS

HON. LANE EVANS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 23, 2004

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, on August 16, President Bush stood before the national convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and proclaimed: "... my administration has a solid record of accomplishment for our veterans ... To provide health care to veterans, we've increased VA medical care funding by 41 percent over the past 4 years."

The reality is far more complex.

In 1997, Congress gave the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) the authority to collect and retain veterans' copayments for health care. As a result, about 6.4 percent of the VA's medical care system is now (fiscal year 2004) comprised of veterans' copayments. The Bush Administration has made no secret that it would like to increase the share of this budget borne by veterans, including combat decorated veterans, while at the same time taking steps to discourage veterans' use of their health care system or explicitly bar their entrance into the system. The Administration's budget request for fiscal year 2005 would increase the share of the budget financed by veterans to 8.7 percent.

The Congress—for the third consecutive year—has rejected the legislative proposals in the President's budget that would charge a new enrollment fee for certain veterans and increase copayments for pharmaceutical drugs. Democrats in the House and Senate have also asked VA Secretary Anthony J. Principi to reconsider his current position to prohibit some veterans from enrolling in the VA health care system.

The President's claim that "we've" added 41 percent for VA medical care gives the false